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concerning the interest attaching to folk-lore museums. The project of establishing such a museum, in connection with the work of collection carried on by the Chapter, having been suggested by a member, has been favorably received, and will be acted on during the following winter, when provision will be made for the care of the collection. A folk-lore library has already been established in connection with the Chapter, under the care of Mr. John W. Jordan, at the rooms of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where it will be accessible for consultation by members of the Chapter, and others who may be interested.

MARRIAGE OF A WIDOW IN A SHIFT. — I find in Shearf and Westcoat's "History of Philadelphia," 1884, vol. ii. p. 1687, the following passage, which may be of interest to the readers of the "Journal of American Folk-Lore": —

"It is not doubtful that the ancient English tradition in regard to the marriage of a widow was carried into practice in Philadelphia in or about the year 1734. The tradition runs that the lady, clad in a single and most intimate garment, was stationed behind the door of her room; her arm was protruded through an opening in the door, and the minister officiated with that barrier between the bride and the groom. The arrangement was in consonance with the vulgar idea that a widow could only be held responsible for the debts of a deceased husband to the extent of what she carried upon her person when she was married a second time; hence grew the custom of 'marrying in the shift.' Kalm, writing in 1748, cites an instance of a widow affecting to leave all to her husband's creditors, and 'going from her former house to that of her second husband in her chemise.' Her new husband met her upon the way, and, throwing his cloak about her, cried out, 'I have lent her the garments.' The ceremony was most curiously like the marriage investiture that prevails to the present time in the eastern provinces of Hindostan."

W. J. Potts.

CAMDEN, N. J.

CANT AND THIEVES' JARGON. The article in the present number by Mr. W. C. Wilde may call attention to the question of the existence of a thieves' jargon in America, and to the point whether this jargon is purely European in character or has developed any special features in this country. The peculiar views of Mr. Wilde, on the old English origin of many of the words given by Matsell, will be regarded as open to controversy, since etymologies based on resemblance of sound go for little in modern philology. But the point which concerns us most is, whether the work of Matsell is really a reproduction of American Cant, or a free invention of his own, based on English works. We must confess that many of Matsell's words appear to us exceedingly fishy, and that the differences between those he gives and those contained in English glossaries may, as it seems to us, be mere careless errors of his own. There is a field for any one who has time and opportunity, to explore from personal observa-

tion the cant of the criminal classes in New York and elsewhere, a task which we trust some one will pursue. The existence of thieves' language in China is remarked by Mr. Culin (see the Folk-Lore Scrap-Book). Children, as is known, often employ jargons of their own, apparently made up much in the same manner, using them for the purpose of concealment.

W. W. N.

VERSION OF THE GAME OF THE CHILD-STEALING WITCH (vol. iii. p. 139). — The persons represented are a Mother, many children, and the Old Witch, who is always lame, must carry a stick, and wears a cloak.

The Mother, who is blind, goes out to work, giving each child a piece of sewing, to be done in her absence, represented by the hem of her dress, and which she calls a stint. She bids the children be good, and not let the Old Witch get them. As soon as she leaves, the Old Witch knocks at the door, and asks for fire to light her pipe, saying: "If you don't give it to me, I'll kill you." As the eldest daughter turns to get the fire, the Witch seizes one of the children, and runs away. When the Mother comes back, the children kneel before her, and she puts her hands on their heads, calling them in turn, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. One of the children, slipping down to the end of the line and stooping, simulates the youngest child, who is gone.

This process is repeated until all are gone but one who can no longer keep up the pretence of representing others in addition to herself. The Mother calls out, "O, the Old Witch, has taken all my children! Let us go back for them." She and the daughter go forth, and come to the place where the Old Witch is giving a party. She invites the Mother in. The children are kneeling on the floor, with aprons or dresses over their heads. The Old Witch invites the Mother to taste, saying, "This is Ice-cream," etc., until she comes to a child which she says, is Cherry-pie. The Mother exclaims, "Why, this tastes like my Fanny; how did you get here, child?" The child replies, "My great big toe brought me here;" whereupon all the children start up and run, pursued by the Mother and the Witch. The one whom the Mother catches plays the part of Mother in the next turn, and the one caught by the Witch becomes the new Witch.

Mary H. Skeel.

THE NUMBER TWELVE. Can any one give any explanation of the use of the number twelve, which is employed as a sacred number, and is still preserved in counting our linen, spoons, eggs, and many other things?

Mary H. Skeel, Newburgh, N. Y.

DERIVATION OF NAMES OF FEMALE ACROBATS. — A few days ago the London "Globe" inquired why it was that all the show names of female acrobats begin with Z. My attention was attracted to this many years ago, and I came to the conclusion that all these Zazals, Zamiels, and Zæos, are supplied with "fake names on the slangs," by Hebrew impresarios who have dipped into the Cabala, for they all seem to be derived from Jewish